WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method for ordering products wherein the products are supplied by a supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein an acquiring entity obtains products from the RSC, comprising:

generating, with the acquiring entity, an order to acquire a requested quantity of products;

updating an inventory database with a product record including a requested quantity that the acquiring entity wants to receive of the product based on the generated order;

receiving information from the supplier indicating a commitment quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the RSC to meet the requested quantity;

updating the inventory database with the information received from the supplier to indicate the commitment quantity; and
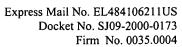
updating the inventory database from information received from the RSC indicating products shipped from the supplier for one specified product record.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

providing product record information in the database to the acquiring entity, supplier, and RSC.

3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for a product represented by the product record; and

ordering an additional quantity of the products to the supplier if the determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum threshold.

4.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

updating the inventory database with information received from the acquiring

3   entity for one product record indicating an order of products from the RSC to deliver

4   to the acquiring entity to fulfill the order.

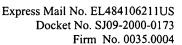1   5.   The method of claim 4, further comprising:

2   determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for a product

3   from information maintained in the product record as a function of the quantity of the

4   products indicated in the product record as available at the RSC and an average

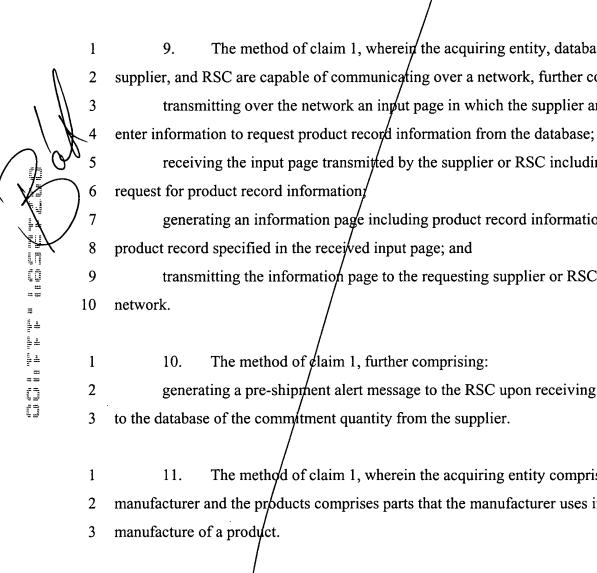5   acquiring entity order rate of the product from the RSC; and

6   transmitting an order for an additional quantity of the products to the supplier

7   if the determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum

8   threshold.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the average acquiring entity order rate

2   is determined from the product record information indicating a forecasted number of

3   components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

4   product record.

1   7.   The method of claim 5, wherein the average acquiring entity order rate

2   is determined from the product record information indicating a number of the

3   products the acquiring entity ordered from the RSC and a forecasted number of

4   components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

5   product record.

1   8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2   supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further comprising:

3   transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier and RSC

4   enter data to update the inventory database.

1   9.   The method of claim 1, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2   supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further comprising:

3   transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier and RSC

4   enter information to request product record information from the database;

5   receiving the input page transmitted by the supplier or RSC including a

6   request for product record information;

7   generating an information page including product record information for the

8   product record specified in the received input page; and

9   transmitting the information page to the requesting supplier or RSC over the
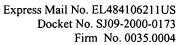
10   network.

1   10.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   generating a pre-shipment alert message to the RSC upon receiving the update

3   to the database of the commitment quantity from the supplier.

1   11.   The method of claim 1, wherein the acquiring entity comprises a

2   manufacturer and the products comprises parts that the manufacturer uses in the

3   manufacture of a product.

1   12.   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2   generating an invoice once the ordered products are delivered to the acquiring

3   entity and confirmed by the supplier.

13.   A method for ordering products, wherein the products are supplied by

a supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein the acquiring entity

obtains products from the RSC, comprising the supplier performing:

accessing information in an inventory database including product records,

wherein each product record indicates a specified product, wherein the inventory data

base is capable of being updated from: (i) information received from the acquiring

entity to add a product record including a requested quantity that the acquiring entity

wants to receive and (ii) information received from the RSC indicating products

shipped from the supplier for one specified product record;

determining from the accessed information the requested quantity for one

product record; and

updating one product record in the inventory database indicating a

commitment quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the

RSC to meet the requested quantity.

14.   The method of claim 13, further comprising:

receiving an order for an additional quantity of the products for one product

record from the acquiring entity if a acquiring entity determines that number of days

of supply for the product is less than a minimum threshold.

15.   The method of claim 14, wherein the order is received from a

acquiring entity.

16.   The method of claim 13, wherein the supplier further performs:

updating one product record in the inventory database indicating shipment

status of products the supplier is shipping to the RSC to satisfy the commitment

quantity for the product record being updated.

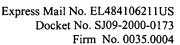1   17.   The method of claim 18, further comprising:

2   receiving a message from the acquiring entity if the commitment quantity is

3   less than the requested quantity for the product record.

1   18.   A method for ordering products, wherein the products are supplied by

2   a supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein the acquiring entity

3   obtains products from the RSC, comprising the RSC performing the steps of:

4   accessing information in an inventory database including product records,

5   wherein each product record indicates a specified product, wherein the inventory data

6   base is capable of being updated from: (i) information received from the acquiring

7   entity to add a product record including a requested quantity that the acquiring entity

8   wants to receive and (ii) information received from the supplier indicating a

9   commitment quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the

10   RSC to meet the requested quantity; and

11   updating one product record in the inventory database indicating products

12   received from the supplier for one specified product record.

1   19.   The method of claim 18, wherein the RSC performs:
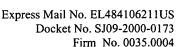
2   receiving an order from the acquiring entity computer for products for one

3   product record to ship to the acquiring entity; and

4   updating the product record in the inventory database indicating products

5   shipped from the RSC to the acquiring entity.

1   20.   A system for ordering products wherein the products are supplied by a

2   supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein an acquiring entity obtains

3   products from the RSC, comprising:

4   means for generating, with the acquiring entity, an order to acquire a requested

5   quantity of products;

6   means for updating an inventory database with a product record including a

7   requested quantity that the acquiring entity wants to receive of the product based on

8   the generated order;

9   means for receiving information from the supplier indicating a commitment

10   quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the RSC to meet

11   the requested quantity;

12   means for updating the inventory database with the information received from

13   the supplier to indicate the commitment quantity; and

14   means for updating the inventory database from information received from the

15   RSC indicating products shipped from the supplier for one specified product record.

16

17   21.   The system of claim 20, further comprising:

18   means for providing product record information in the database to the

19   acquiring entity, supplier, and RSC.
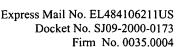
1   22.   The system of claim 20, further comprising:

2   means for determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for

3   a product represented by the product record; and

4   means for ordering an additional quantity of the products to the supplier if the

5   determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum

6   threshold.

1   23.   The system of claim 20, further comprising:

2   means for updating the inventory database with information received from the

3   acquiring entity for one product record indicating an order of products from the RSC

4   to deliver to the acquiring entity to fulfill the order.
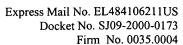
1   24.   The system of claim 20, further comprising:

2   means for determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for

3   a product from information maintained in the product record as a function of the

4   quantity of the products indicated in the product record as available at the RSC and an

5   average acquiring entity order rate of the product from the RSC; and

6   means for transmitting an order for an additional quantity of the products to

7   the supplier if the determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a

8   minimum threshold.

1   25.   The system of claim 24, wherein the average acquiring entity order rate

2   is determined from the product record information indicating a forecasted number of

3   components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

4   product record.

1   26.   The system of claim 24, wherein the average acquiring entity order rate

2   is determined from the product record information indicating a number of the

3   products the acquiring entity ordered from the RSC and a forecasted number of

4   components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

5   product record.

1   27.   The system of claim 20, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2   supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further comprising:

3   means for transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier

4   and RSC enter data to update the inventory database.

1   28.   The system of claim 20, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2   supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further comprising:

3   means for transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier

4   and RSC enter information to request product record information from the database;

5   means for receiving the input page transmitted by the supplier or RSC

6   including a request for product record information;

7   means for generating an information page including product record

8   information for the product record specified in the received input page; and

9   means for transmitting the information page to the requesting supplier or RSC

10   over the network.

1   29.   The system of claim 20, further comprising:

2   means for generating a pre-shipment alert message to the RSC upon receiving

3   the update to the database of the commitment quantity from the supplier.

1   30.   The system of claim 20, wherein the acquiring entity comprises a

2   manufacturer and the products comprises parts that the manufacturer uses in the

3   manufacture of a product.

1   31.   The system of claim 20, further comprising:

2   generating an invoice once the ordered products are delivered to the acquiring

3   entity and confirmed by the supplier.

1   32.   A system for ordering products, wherein the products are supplied by a

2   supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein the acquiring entity obtains

3   products from the RSC, a supplier machine comprising:

4   means for accessing information in an inventory database including product

5   records, wherein each product record indicates a specified product, wherein the

6   inventory data base is capable of being updated from: (i) information received from
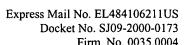
7   the acquiring entity to add a product record including a requested quantity that the

8   acquiring entity wants to receive and (ii) information received from the RSC

9   indicating products shipped from the supplier for one specified product record;

10   means for determining from the accessed information the requested quantity

11   for one product record; and

12   means for updating one product record in the inventory database indicating a

13   commitment quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the

14   RSC to meet the requested quantity.

1   33.   The system of claim 32, further comprising:

2   means for receiving an order for an additional quantity of the products for one

3   product record from the acquiring entity if a acquiring entity determines that number

4   of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum threshold.

1   34.   The system of claim 33, wherein the order is received from a acquiring

2   entity.

1   35.   The system of claim 32, wherein the supplier machine further

2   comprises:

3   means for updating one product record in the inventory database indicating
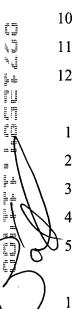
4   shipment status of products the supplier is shipping to the RSC to satisfy the

5   commitment quantity for the product record being updated.

1   36.   The system of claim 32, further comprising:

2   means for receiving a message from the acquiring entity if the commitment

3   quantity is less than the requested quantity for the product record.

37.   A system for ordering products, wherein the products are supplied by a

supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein the acquiring entity obtains

3   products from the RSC, a RSC machine comprising:

4   means for accessing information in an inventory database including product

5   records, wherein each product record indicates a specified product, wherein the

6   inventory data base is capable of being updated from: (i) information received from

7   the acquiring entity to add a product record including a requested quantity that the

8   acquiring entity wants to receive and (ii) information received from the supplier

9   indicating a commitment quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to

10   ship to the RSC to meet the requested quantity; and

11   means for updating one product record in the inventory database indicating

12   products received from the supplier for one specified product record.

1   38.   The system of claim 37, wherein the RSC machine further comprises:

2   means for receiving an order from the acquiring entity computer for products

3   for one product record to ship to the acquiring entity; and

4   means for updating the product record in the inventory database indicating

5   products shipped from the RSC to the acquiring entity.

1   39.   A program for ordering products wherein the products are supplied by

2   a supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein an acquiring entity

3   obtains products from the RSC, comprising a computer usable media including at

4   least one computer program embedded therein that is capable or causing at least one

5   computer to perform:

6   generating, with the acquiring entity, an order to acquire a requested quantity

7   of products;

8   updating an inventory database with a product record including a requested

9   quantity that the acquiring entity wants to receive of the product based on the

10   generated order;

11   receiving information from the supplier indicating a commitment quantity of a

12   number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the RSC to meet the requested

13   quantity;
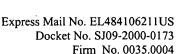
14   updating the inventory database with the information received from the

15   supplier to indicate the commitment quantity;

16   updating the inventory database from information received from the RSC

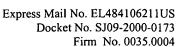17   indicating products shipped from the supplier for one specified product record

18

19   40.   The program of claim 39, further performing:

20   providing product record information in the database to the acquiring entity,

21   supplier, and RSC.

1   41.   The program of claim 39, further performing:

2   determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for a product

3   represented by the product record; and

4   ordering an additional quantity of the products to the supplier if the

5   determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum

6   threshold.

1   42.   The program of claim 39, further performing:

2   updating the inventory database with information received from the acquiring

3   entity for one product record indicating an order of products from the RSC to deliver

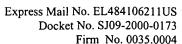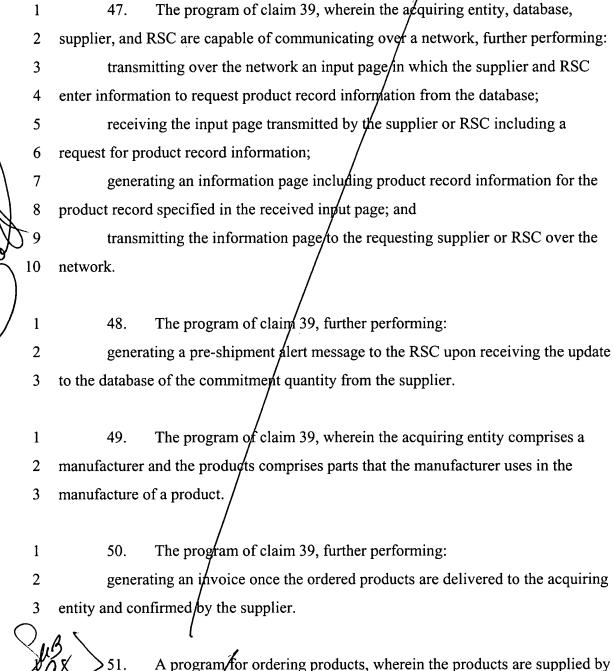4   to the acquiring entity to fulfill the order.

1   43.   The program of claim 42, further performing:

2   determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for a product

3 from information maintained in the product record as a function of the quantity of the

4 products indicated in the product record as available at the RSC and an average

5 acquiring entity order rate of the product from the RSC; and

6   transmitting an order for an additional quantity of the products to the supplier

7 if the determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum

8 threshold.

1   44.   The program of claim 43, wherein the average acquiring entity order

2 rate is determined from the product record information indicating a forecasted number

3 of components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

4 product record.

1   45.   The program of claim 43, wherein the average acquiring entity order

2 rate is determined from the product record information indicating a number of the

3 products the acquiring entity ordered from the RSC and a forecasted number of

4 components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

5 product record.

1   46.   The program of claim 39, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2 supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further performing:

3   transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier and RSC

4 enter data to update the inventory database.

1   47.   The program of claim 39, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2 supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further performing:

3   transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier and RSC

4 enter information to request product record information from the database;

5   receiving the input page transmitted by the supplier or RSC including a

6 request for product record information;

7   generating an information page including product record information for the

8 product record specified in the received input page; and

9   transmitting the information page to the requesting supplier or RSC over the

10 network.

1   48.   The program of claim 39, further performing:

2   generating a pre-shipment alert message to the RSC upon receiving the update

3 to the database of the commitment quantity from the supplier.

1   49.   The program of claim 39, wherein the acquiring entity comprises a

2 manufacturer and the products comprises parts that the manufacturer uses in the

3 manufacture of a product.

1   50.   The program of claim 39, further performing:

2   generating an invoice once the ordered products are delivered to the acquiring

3 entity and confirmed by the supplier.

1   51.   A program for ordering products, wherein the products are supplied by

2 a supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein the acquiring entity

3 obtains products from the RSC, comprising a computer usable media including at
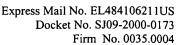
4 least one computer program embedded therein that is capable or causing at least one
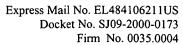
5 computer to perform:

6   accessing information in an inventory database including product records,

7   wherein each product record indicates a specified product, wherein the inventory data

8   base is capable of being updated from: (i) information received from the acquiring

9   entity to add a product record including a requested quantity that the acquiring entity

10   wants to receive and (ii) information received from the RSC indicating products

11   shipped from the supplier for one specified product record;

12   determining from the accessed information the requested quantity for one

13   product record; and

14   updating one product record in the inventory database indicating a

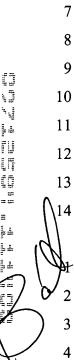15   commitment quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the

16   RSC to meet the requested quantity.

1   52.   The program of claim 51, further performing:

2   receiving an order for an additional quantity of the products for one product

3   record from the acquiring entity if a acquiring entity determines that number of days

4   of supply for the product is less than a minimum threshold.

1   53.   The program of claim 52, wherein the order is received from a

2   acquiring entity.

1   54.   The program of claim 51, wherein the supplier further performs:

2   updating one product record in the inventory database indicating shipment

3   status of products the supplier is shipping to the RSC to satisfy the commitment

4   quantity for the product record being updated.

1   55.   The program of claim 51, further performing:

2   receiving a message from the acquiring entity if the commitment quantity is

3   less than the requested quantity for the product record.

56.   A program for ordering products, wherein the products are supplied by
a supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein the acquiring entity
obtains products from the RSC, comprising a computer usable media including at
least one computer program embedded therein that is capable or causing at least one
computer to perform:

accessing information in an inventory database including product records,
wherein each product record indicates a specified product, wherein the inventory data
base is capable of being updated from: (i) information received from the acquiring
entity to add a product record including a requested quantity that the acquiring entity
wants to receive and (ii) information received from the supplier indicating a
commitment quantity of a number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the
RSC to meet the requested quantity; and

updating one product record in the inventory database indicating products
received from the supplier for one specified product record.

57.   The program of claim 56, wherein the RSC performs:
receiving an order from the acquiring entity computer for products for one
product record to ship to the acquiring entity; and
updating the product record in the inventory database indicating products
shipped from the RSC to the acquiring entity.

58.   A method for purchasing products wherein the products are supplied
by a supplier to a replenishment service center (RSC), wherein an acquiring entity
obtains products from the RSC, comprising:
generating, with the acquiring entity, an order to acquire a requested quantity
of products;

6   updating an inventory database with a product record including a requested

7   quantity that the acquiring entity wants to receive of the product based on the

8   generated order;

9   receiving information from the supplier indicating a commitment quantity of a

10   number of the products the supplier intends to ship to the RSC to meet the requested

11   quantity;

12   updating the inventory database with the information received from the

13   supplier to indicate the commitment quantity;

14   updating the inventory database from information received from the RSC

15   indicating products shipped from the supplier for one specified product record;

16   updating the inventory database with information received from the acquiring

17   entity for one product record indicating an order of products from the RSC to deliver

18   to the acquiring entity to fulfill the order; and

19   generating an invoice once the ordered products are delivered to the acquiring

20   entity and confirmed by the supplier.

1   59.   The method of claim 58, further comprising:
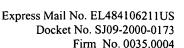
2   determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for a product

3   represented by the product record; and

4   ordering an additional quantity of the products to the supplier if the

5   determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum

6   threshold.

1   60.   The method of claim 58, further comprising:

2   determining a number of days of supply of products at the RSC for a product

3   from information maintained in the product record as a function of the quantity of the

4   products indicated in the product record as available at the RSC and an average

5   acquiring entity order rate of the product from the RSC; and

6   transmitting an order for an additional quantity of the products to the supplier

7   if the determined number of days of supply for the product is less than a minimum

8   threshold.

1   61.   The method of claim 60, wherein the average acquiring entity order

2   rate is determined from the product record information indicating a forecasted number

3   of components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

4   product record.

1   62.   The method of claim 60, wherein the average acquiring entity order

2   rate is determined from the product record information indicating a number of the

3   products the acquiring entity ordered from the RSC and a forecasted number of

4   components to be ordered as indicated in the requested quantity information for the

5   product record.

1   63.   The method of claim 58, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2   supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further comprising:

3   transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier and RSC

4   enter data to update the inventory database.

1   64.   The method of claim 58, wherein the acquiring entity, database,

2   supplier, and RSC are capable of communicating over a network, further comprising:

3   transmitting over the network an input page in which the supplier and RSC

4   enter information to request product record information from the database;

5   receiving the input page transmitted by the supplier or RSC including a

6   request for product record information;

7   generating an information page including product record information for the

8   product record specified in the received input page; and

9   transmitting the information page to the requesting supplier or RSC over the

10   network.

1   65.   The method of claim 58, wherein the acquiring entity comprises a

2   manufacturer and the products comprises parts that the manufacturer uses in the

3   manufacture of a product.